



June 1, 2005

Dear Community Friends:

Car related crimes in the South Precinct have increased dramatically in the past year. You are more likely to be a victim of a vehicle crime than any other crime reported to the Seattle Police Department. Even an inexperienced car prowler or car thief can gain access to your car in virtually seconds. Most car prowls themselves take less than two minutes. The damage done to locks and windows can be very expensive to repair and cause great inconvenience.

The following are recommendations that can reduce your risk of being a victim of a car prowler or auto theft. Please share this prevention information with others.

Vehicle Crime Prevention Measures

- When you exit or enter your parked vehicle, stop and take a look around the area.
- Before leaving your parked car, always remove the keys, roll up the windows and lock the car.
- If possible, store your car in a closed and locked garage and make a habit of locking your garage door and car doors.
- If your car is stored in a carport or parked near your house, leave your exterior lights on throughout the night.
- If you park on the street, choose a well-lit, open space even if it means adding additional street/yard lighting & trimming back trees/bushes that block your view of your vehicle.
- Consider replacing the light fixture closest to your car with a motion detector unit. Motion detectors are good psychological deterrents since the normal assumption of a person seeing a light come on is that someone has seen them. Additionally, the light has made the prowler or thief more visible.

Leave No Valuables in Your Car

- Because we spend so much time in our cars, we often leave valuables inside. An item of little or no value to you still looks inviting to a thief. Any valuable items that can be removed should be taken with you. When you can help it, do not leave anything of value in the interior of your car.
- If valuables must be left in the car, keep them out of sight prior to parking the car. Even better is to place these items in the trunk.

Report It!

Officers are doing their best to apprehend car thieves and car prowlers. However, we can only do that when the crimes are reported.

I often speak to victims of car related crimes who relate to me that they didn't report the crime. There are a variety of reasons given, such as "it wasn't an emergency," "they just took a small item and I didn't think it was worth reporting," "it happens all the time," etc. **We need you to report the crimes.** It helps us determine where the activity is occurring and where we need to concentrate our patrol and interdiction efforts.

If you see a crime in progress, call 9-1-1 immediately. Give the best description you can of the person(s) or vehicle that may be involved.

If your car is prowled, report the incident to 9-1-1, even if you do not report it to your insurance company. Again, we need to know what areas are experiencing these crimes so we can better focus our resources.

Next Time: more on car related crimes

Take Care and Stay Safe!

Mark Solomon
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